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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001027

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TAGS: [PTER PHUM CE LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: NORWEGIANS AND FOREIGN SECRETARY ON CURRENT STATE  
OF PLAY IN RUNUP TO CO-CHAIRS MEETING

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JEFFREY J. LUNSTEAD FOR REASON 1.4 (D).

1. (C) Summary. The Norwegian Ambassador describes his June 7 meeting with LTTE political chief Tamilchelvam as "mixed," with the LTTE focused on the "transportation issue" and not willing to agree to a meeting with the GSL to discuss strengthening the CFA. Foreign Secretary Palihakkara conceded to the Ambassador that the GSL is committing CFA violations but averred (correctly) that historically the LTTE has been responsible for the majority of violations and therefore the co-chairs should pressure them accordingly, beginning with their statement in Washington next week. End Summary

"Mixed Experience" in Kilinochchi  
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2. (C) Norwegian Ambassador Brattskar briefed the Ambassador June 8 on his visit to LTTE headquarters in Kilinochchi the previous day. Brattskar told Ambassador that he had a "mixed experience" in Kilinochchi. He traveled there together with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which is not usually the case. Much of the visit was spent discussing the "transportation issue." The GSL has recently turned down two LTTE requests for helicopter transport of their leaders from Kilinochchi to other stations, contrary to the usual practice. The two sides, Brattskar said, were working to find a way around this problem. LTTE political chief Tamilchelvam told Brattskar that the Tigers were frustrated that discussion about the Joint Mechanism (JM) was overshadowing the problems with the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA). Brattskar told Tamilchelvam that he wanted to be able to confirm to his Co-chair colleagues in Washington next week that the Tigers stand by the CFA and still were willing to sign the JM. Tamilchelvam said yes to both, but said the Tigers had doubts about the GSL's willingness to implement the CFA and their ability to implement the JM if it is signed.

3. (C) The SLMM brought up the killing of Army intelligence officer Major Muthalif last week, noting that it was not easy to get transportation requests approved in such an atmosphere. Brattskar jumped in that he was deeply concerned that a type of "dirty war" was developing. The Tigers responded by citing the killing of Tamil journalist Sivaram. Ambassador asked Brattskar if it might be useful to get the two sides together just to discuss the CFA. Brattskar said he agreed and that the GSL was also interested in such a discussion, but that the Tigers had not yet agreed to such a meeting. For them, Brattskar said, everything is connected, and they question the value of such a meeting if the GSL can't agree to sign the Joint Mechanism. Ambassador responded that maintaining the ceasefire was so important that they should be willing to put a boundary around it and discuss it.

Foreign Secretary Blames LTTE, Concedes GSL CFA  
Violations  
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4. (C) In a June 8 call on Foreign Secretary Palihakkara, the Ambassador told him that the upcoming co-chairs meeting would likely focus on the joint mechanism and on the fragile state of the cease-fire agreement (CFA). If the mechanism has not been signed before the meeting, the co-chairs will have to think about next steps in the absence of discernible progress on the peace front. Moreover, it appears that a "dirty war" may be unfolding, with both sides ignoring key aspects of the CFA as killings and other violations mount. This could easily escalate. Palihakkara agreed with the Ambassador's observation that any co-chairs statement needed to encourage completion of the "joint mechanism" (if

it has not gone forward before the Washington meeting) without using specific language that might inflame tensions in Sri Lanka. The Secretary averred that the question is "not

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whether but when" the President will sign the joint mechanism. The recent joint communique' with the Indians in which New Delhi supported the joint mechanism is very helpful to the President's efforts, Palihakkara stated.

15. (C) Regarding the CFA, Palihakkara said he took exception to the Ambassador's use of the term "dirty war" which implied "inaccurate equivalency to Central America." The GSL is very concerned about CFA violations but the fault lies with the LTTE. It is clear, the Ambassador replied, that the vast majority of CFA violations over time have been committed by the LTTE and the co-chairs will seek to influence the Tigers towards better behavior, as hard as that might be, through public statements and other means. He was not suggesting a moral equivalency between the GSL and the LTTE. The fact remained, however, that it is increasingly clear that the GSL has been involved in the recent escalation of violence (although the LTTE deserves most of the blame, as illustrated by the Muthalif murder). Palihakkara conceded that "certain agencies" might be involved. Nonetheless, he continued, the LTTE bears most of the blame and, since the Tigers care what the international community says and thinks ("since they need the international community for freedom of travel and fundraising"), the co-chairs should call the LTTE to account. He noted that the LTTE responded quickly when the UN Special Representative criticized the LTTE on child recruitment, with the threat of travel sanctions.

COMMENT

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16. (C) Brattskar's conversation with the Tigers confirms that, as usual, they are unwilling to take steps which might help to move the process along. It is noteworthy that Palihakkara, while rightly noting that the Tigers egregiously violate the ceasefire, admitted that the GSL is also involved in the latest round of killings.  
LUNSTEAD